

**WHITHER?**

To-day the world is moving as never before. The sling and the bow have been replaced by the gun that throws its high explosive, death-dealing shell twenty miles or more. Hand to hand fighting on the open field has been replaced by trench warfare. The patient pack mule has been replaced by the automobile truck. Messages, once sent by couriers on foot or on horseback, are now spoken thousands of miles away through a wireless machine. Observations, instead of being taken from a tree top, are now taken by an aeroplane thousands of feet up in the air.

In former days nations rarely fought with any other nations than those who were their near neighbors. To-day nations from all parts of the world are engaged in deadly conflict. Ordinarily only a few nations at a time have engaged in war. To-day nearly all the nations of the world are engaged in a terrible death struggle.

In government wonderful changes have taken place. China has had revolution upon revolution. Russia has thrown itself into chaos. In England, France, Italy, Greece, and even in Germany, there have been frequent changes in governments. In them all there has been a restless dissatisfaction with conditions as they were, and a demand for change.

There have been great changes in the business world. Small establishments have become great manufacturing plants. Where men used to talk in thousands, they are now talking in millions and billions.

In family and social life changes have taken place with wonderful rapidity, with the rapidly increasing use of electricity, automobiles and other matters of luxury and convenience.

The tendency to change in moral and spiritual things is very evident. The old standards are being laid aside and new ones are being adopted. Oftentimes the only basis for the new standard is that of convenience, or it is in direct contradiction of the teaching of the Scriptures that we are not to do evil that good may come out of it. Let us take just two examples of a very serious change of sentiment that is finding a place in an increasing number of minds and hearts.

A few days ago we heard some ladies who were busily engaged knitting woolen garments for the soldiers discussing the question as to whether it would not be right to take their knitting to church and work on it during the time of worship. Some there are who, we believe, would not hesitate to do so if they thought that public opinion would not condemn them. We have seen others who were knitting on the street cars on Sunday. How much of this work is done on Sunday in the homes we do not know. That such a thought should find favor in the mind of any Christian woman shows a distressing condition of affairs. And the argument used is that the soldiers need the clothes. If there were actual, severe and immediate suffering for want of the clothing there might be some reason for such work. We have had no intimation that any of our soldiers are suffering or are likely to suffer for lack of clothes. It is a serious matter to disregard one of God's most emphatic laws and substitute in its place an opinion of our own.

Another and even a worse change of sentiment is making itself heard in many parts of the world. Because of the large number of men who are being killed in the war, it is said that when the war is over there will not be enough men left to provide husbands for all the women, and so the normal supply of children, out of whom the coming generation is to come, will be below normal. To prevent

this economic condition, it is proposed that polygamy either permanent or temporary shall be established, and that the government shall take care of the unmarried mothers and their children. It is hard to see how any decent man can advocate such a plan, and yet it has been publicly advocated by some women who set themselves up as leaders of the thought of women.

Here, again, the proposition is to ignore entirely one of God's positive commands, and the only excuse given for doing so is that economic conditions require that there shall be as many children born in the country as possible.

It may be said that there is no danger of either of these sins becoming general. We hope and pray not. But we know the power of sin well enough to know that eternal vigilance is the price of safety. We know also that the best time to strike a poisonous viper is when it first sticks its head out of its hole. It would be foolish to wait for it to crawl quietly into the home among the little children who, not knowing its danger, would make a plaything of it.

It is a well known fact that all times of stress and strain are trying upon the moral and spiritual life of the people. For this reason every Christian should be on his guard. He should live close to God. He should stand firm upon the principles of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. He should make his own life conform to God's requirements just as far as effort and sacrifice will make it possible, and exert every influence for good upon others that they too may not be swept away by the on-rushing tide.

If Christian people the world over, or in any country, will be on guard against the encroachment of sin, the individual and the Church will emerge from this terrible war stronger and better than when it began. Otherwise the powers of evil will gain tremendously in their hold upon the world.

These questions ought to be asked seriously, and left to God for an answer, by every Christian: Whither am I going? Whither is the Church going? Whither is the world going?

**THE SERIOUS SITUATION.**

It does not take the jaundiced eye of a pessimist to see that our country is facing a serious situation. Never in the long history of our nation have we stood in the presence of so great a menace. Wherever we look we may well stop and consider seriously the state of affairs.

Whether for war or against it—whether we are pro-Ally or pro-German, we are face to face with a condition, not a theory.

Our condition as a nation—politically—is serious enough. We were put in the place where we were compelled to choose between failure to do our duty as a government, or enter upon a world war. The object of all government is for the good of its subjects. Our constitution entitles us to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It is the duty of the collective force of our country, represented in the government, to see that these things are not denied us. When our ships are sunk, our crews are butchered, our wives and children drowned in a ruthless and underhanded way; it was a solemn duty of our government to take up arms.

What does that mean? It means that thousands of our sons will battle on European battle fields to their death and maiming. That millions and billions of treasure must be spent—that our whole manner of life must be reversed.

We must contend against the most powerful, adroit, ruthless and unconquered foe to human liberty that the world has ever seen. The outcome will be either the destruction of autocratic government; the emancipation of the world, or the world will become Germanized—and Belgium can tell us what that means. The tremendous difficulty of battling with a foe across the ocean is no mean one. It will tax the entire resources of our nation to win this war.

Our condition financially is a serious one.

The income of few has increased. The income of the many has positively and violently decreased. The dollar to-day does not buy fifty cents' worth of anything we want and must have. Economy has begun to be practiced and must be practiced still more. Few are the households who will not feel it severely. When we remember that nearly one-half our people live very close to the line of suffering, we can easily see that financially we are standing in a very serious predicament. Taxes will continue to mount up and we will have to export more and more of our foodstuffs to feed the starving world. When the millions of soldiers get on the battle front, we will shoot away millions a day. This is clear wastage and will require the strength of millions of workers at home to supply munitions and food to the soldiers.

The religious condition of the country is a serious one.

Ten millions of men are liable to be broken up in their accustomed ways of living; carried into the presence of untold temptations; put under a religious strain that they never felt before. We know something of the dangers that surround the boy who goes from a quiet home to the glitter and glare and temptation of the city.

To the soldier this temptation is increased tenfold. He has no special choice of companions. He is in sight and hearing of all kinds of temptation, with few of the things that help to support men in such a state.

The world is under the fire. Its testing time is come. We do not despair. This nation is ordained of God for great things.

How can we meet these conditions and quit ourselves like men?

We should stand by our country to the last ounce of our strength. Unless our souls are saffron in color we will do this. Now is the time to show our loyalty. To study anew the origin of our country and refresh our souls with the ways of providence that point us to an evident destiny for us. God has surely raised this, the last and greatest of the family of nations, that we should lead off in the procession of liberty-loving peoples. In this way we can prepare the highway for our King.

It is no time to be beating over old academic questions as to what human liberty means or crying out that "our rights under the constitution are being invaded." It were better for our government to stretch the constitution a bit than for Germany to tear it up and Belgianize our country.

We should meet the economic demands with a rigid saving. We can live and live well on much less. Disease will not fatten upon us so readily. Most people kill themselves eating. Doctors are needed at the front and not in our homes. It is a better place for them to be. Our wasteful habits are a disgrace to our nation and a proper saving there will redound to the glory of God. He is against waste.

The religious condition calls loudly for a greater sacrifice in our home and foreign missionary work. The hope of the world lies along these lines. We must revive righteousness, and